

EXHIBIT A

BROWER PIVEN
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

With offices in New York City and Baltimore, Maryland, Brower Piven focuses its practice in the areas of complex class action and other representative litigation. The firm's practice areas, while diverse, enable Brower Piven clients to call upon experience and resources available at few firms of its size. Brower Piven clients range from institutional and large private investors, to small and large businesses, to small individual investors and retail consumers. Regardless of the size of the matter, Brower Piven provides every client with the professional service, care, and quality that Brower Piven believes every client deserves.

Attorneys at Brower Piven, some with over 25 years of experience, are nationally recognized in the class action arena. The firm's attorneys have vast experience advising and representing plaintiffs in class actions under the federal securities laws; federal and state consumer protection laws; federal and state antitrust laws; state shareholder and corporate governance laws; federal and state environmental laws; and federal RICO laws. Brower Piven attorneys have served their clients in literally hundreds of actions in virtually every state and federal court in the nation.

Some current matters in which Brower Piven has a leadership role demonstrate the scope of the firm's expertise. Brower Piven is co-lead counsel in the *In re Merck Securities, Derivative, and "ERISA" Litigation* pending in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, considered by many the largest federal securities fraud action in terms of damages in history, and co-lead and liaison counsel in the shareholder litigations challenging the proposed \$38 billion take-over of Equity Office Properties Trust, one of the largest going private transaction in business history. Brower Piven is also co-lead counsel in the following federal securities class actions: *Wagner v. Barrick Gold Corporation et al.* (S.D.N.Y); *In re Interlink Electronics, Inc. Securities Litigation* (C.D. Cal.); *In re FoxHollow Technologies, Inc. Securities Litigation* (N.D. Cal.); *Levie v. Sears Roebuck & Co. et al.* (N.D. Ill.); and *In re Arotech Corp. Securities Litigation* (E.D.N.Y.). Brower Piven is or was co-lead and/or liaison counsel representing shareholders in the following merger-related class actions: *Blaz v. Pan Pacific Retail Properties, Inc. et al.* (Cir. Ct., Balt. Co.); *In re Reckson Associates Realty Corp. Shareholders Litigation* (N.Y. Sup. Ct., Nassau Co.); *In re Fairchild Corp. Shareholders Litigation* (Del. Ch.); *In re Laureate Education Shareholder Litigation* (Cir. Ct. Balt. City); *In re PHH Corporation Transaction Litigation* (Cir. Ct., Balt. Co.); *In re Huntsman Corporation Shareholder Litigation* (Del. Ch.). Brower Piven is also counsel in the consumer class action, *H&R Block, Inc. "Express IRA" Marketing Litigation*, MDL No. 1786 (W.D. Mo.).

The breadth of Brower Piven's experience, which includes extensive experience counseling and representing defendants, corporations and their executives, real estate developers and large private investors in complex commercial litigation, class and non-class action litigation, and on corporate governance matters. The firm's experience on both sides of the bar makes it uniquely qualified to provide its clients with a perspective not available from firms that solely represent plaintiffs or defendants. The success of the strategy pursued by Brower Piven's attorneys in representing their clients over the years has been demonstrated by clients and classes represented by attorneys at Brower Piven recovering over \$1 billion in past and pending recoveries.

The following is a sampling of the cases and results achieved by attorneys at Brower Piven where they have served as lead or co-lead counsel for plaintiffs:

Steiner v. Southmark Corporation, No. 3-89-1387-D (N.D. Tex.), federal securities fraud class action against defunct real estate partnership marketer and its outside accountants resulting in a recovery of over \$75 million in cash for investors.

In re Petro-Lewis Securities Litigation, No. 84-C-326 (D. Colo.), a federal securities fraud class action on behalf of limited partners and shareholders where plaintiffs recovered over \$100 million in cash and benefits including the restructuring of dozens of oil and gas limited partnerships.

In re StarLink Products Liability Litigation, MDL No. 1403, No. 01 C 4928 (N.D. Ill.), representing all American corn farmers in nationwide litigation against manufacturer of unapproved pesticide which alleged infected the U.S. corn supply and recovering over \$125 million in cash for the class member.

Romig v. Jefferson-Pilot Life Insurance Company, 95 CVS 9703 (Supr. Ct. N.C.), deceptive insurance sales practices action brought on behalf of a class of Jefferson Pilot life insurance purchasers, resulting in a recovery for policyholders valued at over \$55 million.

In re MicroStrategy Securities Litigation, No. 00-473-A (E.D. Va.), a federal securities fraud class, where over \$125 million was recovered for investors, the Court commented that: "Clearly, the conduct of all counsel in this case and the result they have achieved for all of the parties confirms that they deserve the national recognition that they enjoy."

In re Arakis Energy Corporation Securities Litigation, No. 95-CV-3431 (ARR) (E.D.N.Y.), federal securities class action against Canadian company resulting in a recovery of over \$24 million for investors.

In re Spectrum Information Technologies Securities Litigation, CV-93-2295 (FB) (E.D.N.Y.), securities fraud action against bankrupt issuer where over \$10 million in cash was recovered (including all insurance coverage available) for investors following successful trial and appeal against directors' and officers' insurance carrier who attempted to disclaim coverage.

In re Bristol-Myers Squibb Securities Litigation, 92-CIV-4007 (JES) (S.D.N.Y.), federal securities class action resulting in recovery of over \$19 million in cash for investors.

Steiner v. Ideal Basic Industries, Inc., No. 86-M-456 (D. Colo.), federal securities class action against the former *Fortune 500* cement manufacturer resulting in an over \$17.5 million recovery in cash for investors.

In re Broadwing Securities Litigation, No. C-1-02-795 (S.D. Ohio), federal securities class action against major public utility/broadband company resulting in a recovery of over \$35 million in cash for investors.

Berger v. Compaq Computer Corporation, No. 00-20875 (S.D. Tex.), a federal securities class action where, after a successful appeal of a question of first impression in the federal appellate courts relating to the selection of lead plaintiffs and class certification in the Fifth Circuit under the Private Securities Law Reform Act of 1995, over \$29 million was recovered for investors.

In re Bausch & Lomb Securities Litigation, No. 01-CV-6190 (CJS) (W.D.N.Y.), federal securities class action resulting in a recovery of over \$ 12.5 million for investors.

Slone v. Fifth Third Bancorp et al., No. 1:03-CV-211 (S.D. Ohio), securities fraud action against one of the largest mid-west bank holding companies, resulting in a recovery of \$17 million for investors.

Poziak v. Imperial Chemical Industries, PLC, et al., No. 1:03 cv 2457(NRB)(S.D.N.Y.), securities fraud action against one of the United Kingdom's largest public corporations, resulting in a recovery of approximately 90% of recoverable damages in cash for investors.

J.E. Pierce Apothecary, Inc. v. Harvard-Pilgrim Health Care, Inc., et al., No. 98-12635-WGY (D. Mass.), unfair and deceptive trade practices action on behalf of independent Massachusetts pharmacies against Harvard Pilgrim HMO and CVS Pharmacies, Inc. resulting, after bench trial, in excess of 100% of estimated recoverable damages for the class, including trebling.

The foregoing sampling of results is the product of the depth and breadth of the professional experience of attorneys at Brower Piven. The firm's attorneys include:

DAVID A.P. BROWER

Mr. Brower has over 25 years of complex litigation experience. Mr. Brower has successfully represented plaintiffs in class action securities, consumer protection, environmental, antitrust and RICO actions, and representative shareholder derivative and take-over litigation. Mr. Brower, a member of the Bar of the State of New York, is also admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Courts of Appeals for the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eleventh Circuits, and innumerable federal and state trial courts. Mr. Brower has participated in the prosecution as lead or co-lead counsel in successful federal securities law class actions against, among others: Imperial Chemical Industries, Fifth Third Bancorp, Southmark Corp., Ideal Basic Industries, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Tower Semiconductor, Gibson Greetings, Arakis Energy Corp., Scoreboard, Coastal Healthcare, Everest & Jennings International, B.T. Office Products, Profit Recovery, Enstar Corp., Jenifer Convertibles, Warner Communications, Sambo's Restaurants, Sunrise Savings & Loan, Phillip Morris Companies, Bausch & Lomb, Nanophase Technologies, Ramada Inns, Michael Stores, Inc., Consumers Power Co., Broadwing/Cincinnati Bell, Compaq Computer Corp., and Computer Associates. Mr. Brower has also participated in the prosecution as lead or co-lead counsel in merger litigation on behalf of, among others, public shareholders of Sheller Globe Corp., Petro-Lewis Corp., Floating Point Systems, Holnam Corp., Wometco Enterprises, Inc., Great Bay Casinos Corp., Home Shopping Networks, MCA, Holly Sugar Co., and ARM Financial Group; and

shareholder derivative actions on behalf of shareholders of Banner Industries, Marsh & McLennan Companies, and Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith.

Since 2004, Mr. Brower has been one of the lead attorneys with day-to-day responsibility for the prosecution of the securities fraud claims in *In re Merck & Co, Securities, Derivative & ERISA Litigation*, MDL No. 1658, No. 2:05-CV-02367 (D. N.J.), an action where the damages to class member are estimated to be among the largest in the history of federal securities class litigation. Additionally, while at his former firm, Mr. Brower was one of the attorneys with primary responsibility for class certification issues, including successfully arguing the class certification motion before the trial court, in *In re Initial Public Offering Securities Litigation*, 21 MC 92 (S.D.N.Y.), among the largest securities litigations ever prosecuted, encompassing approximately 309 consolidated class action cases alleging market manipulation claims in connection with the initial public offering of securities by over 55 defendant underwriters. Mr. Brower also served as liaison counsel in *In re Sotheby's Holding, Inc. Securities Litigation*, No. 00 Civ. 1041 (S.D.N.Y.), which resulted in a recovery of over \$75 million for Sotheby's investors.

Mr. Brower has also served as lead or co-lead counsel in consumer fraud actions against Aventis CropScience, Compaq Computer Corporation, Jefferson-Pilot Life Insurance Company, Sprint PCS Wireless, Metropolitan Life Insurance, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, and CVS Corporation. In the antitrust field, Mr. Brower acted as lead counsel in litigation against Monsanto Company, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company and Pioneer Hybrid International, Inc. (No. 4:05-CV-01108-ERW (E.D. Mo.)), on behalf of genetically modified seed purchasers, and has participated in the *In re Initial Public Offering Antitrust Litigation*, No. 01 CIV 2014 (WHP) (S.D.N.Y.).

In the area of environmental law, Mr. Brower has served as one of the lead attorneys in pollution actions on behalf of Oklahoma landowners against chicken producers, including Tyson Foods, Inc.; and counsel for Missouri landowners in pork producer nuisance actions against Contigroup Companies, Inc. (formerly Continental Grain) and Premium Standard Farms, which recently resulted in verdicts in favor of neighboring farmers.

Before joining Brower Piven, Mr. Brower also has represented a nationwide class of hospitals in RICO litigation against Tenet Healthcare Corporation based on claims that its conduct caused class member hospitals to receive reduced "Outlier" reimbursements from Medicare.

Mr. Brower has also represented: directors and officers of public companies in securities class actions, including the directors of Heritage Hospitals; represented a former multi-state hospital developer; advised boards of directors of public companies regarding their fiduciary responsibilities; provided opinions as special counsel under Delaware law to public companies, including MGM/UA; represented insurance and reinsurance companies in coverage litigation, including matters involving Johns Manville, PepsiCo and Hilton Hotels; represented commodities dealers and brokers in connection with Commodities Futures Trading Commission reparations actions; represented foreign corporations in United States litigation, including one of Japan's largest electronics, international hotel and resort companies in litigation against its American counsel and financial advisors; represented a Brazilian trust holding claims for one of Brazil's largest telecommunications companies; and defended a large, Florida-based, national

mortgage brokerage company, Foundation Funding, in class action litigation brought under the Truth In Lending Act.

Mr. Brower, is a graduate of Columbia College of Columbia University (A.B. 1979), and the Georgetown University Law Center (J.D. 1982), and he attended King's College, University of London (1980), where he studied comparative, international, and EC transactional law. Mr. Brower regularly lectures before professional organizations and at CLE-accredited conferences on the class action procedures and securities laws and shareholder and investor rights, including the American Law Institute/American Bar Association Advanced Course of Study Program, the Practicing Law Institute, and the New York State Bar Association. Mr. Brower regularly writes on class action procedures and new issues in class action jurisprudence. Mr. Brower is a long-time member of the New York State Bar Association Subcommittee on Class Actions, has participated as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Association of Securities and Consumer Law Attorneys, and actively participated in legislative initiatives relating to the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005.

CHARLES J. PIVEN

Mr. Piven is a seasoned litigator who has led his own practice since 1990. During his 29 years in practice, Mr. Piven has represented individuals, partnerships, trusts, pension plans and corporations in many types of cases. Mr. Piven's experience includes litigation in the areas of complex securities, shareholder, consumer protection, personal injury and property damage class actions, merger and acquisition class actions, bankruptcy, first amendment, copyright, employment, wrongful death, and legal, medical, accounting and broker malpractice.

Class and representative actions in which Mr. Piven has served as lead, co-lead, liaison or local counsel include, among others, Baltimore Bancorp securities litigation, USFG securities litigation, Yorkridge Calvert Savings & Loan securities litigation, Maryland National Bank securities litigation, Reckson Associates Realty Company derivative litigation, Read-Rite Corporation securities litigation, Mid-Atlantic Realty shareholder merger litigation, Pan Pacific Realty shareholder merger litigation, Allied Irish Banks derivative litigation, Sprint Spectrum Cellular Telecommunications Company consumer litigation, IWIF Wiretap consumer litigation, Land Rover Group Ltd. consumer litigation, Cellular One consumer litigation, H&R Block Refund Anticipation Loan consumer litigation, Prison Telephone consumer litigation, and BlueCross/Blue Shield consumer litigation.

In recent years, Mr. Piven has taken an active role in the prosecution of litigation relating to allegations that mutual fund investors have been victimized by directed brokerage arrangements, excessive fees, excessive commissions and deceptive sales practices or other actionable conduct. Some of the mutual fund families and brokerage firms involved in these cases that Mr. Piven has been responsible for originating include: Lord Abbott, AIM/Invesco, BlackRock, Davis, Eaton Vance, Dreyfus, Evergreen, Federated, Alliance, Franklin, Hartford, MFS, PIMCO, Scudder, Columbia, Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Salomon Smith Barney, Edward Jones, UBS, Wells Fargo and American Express. Investors in mutual fund cases initiated or led by Mr. Piven's clients have achieved a proposed settlement with mutual fund marketer Edward

Jones for over \$125,000,000 and approved settlements with American Express for approximately \$100,000,000 and with Merrill Lynch for approximately \$39,000,000.

Mr. Piven also directly represents the lead plaintiff(s) and/or proposed class representative(s) in approximately 25% of the 309 cases encompassed by the Initial Public Offering Securities Litigation pending in the Southern District of New York, and Mr. Piven and the firm have taken an active role in the discovery in this litigation.

Mr. Piven also has experience in the field of ERISA class actions on behalf of former and current company employees. ERISA cases in which Mr. Piven is or has been counsel for named plaintiffs include: Aquila ERISA litigation (W.D. Mo.); General Motors ERISA litigation (E.D. Mich.); ConAgra Foods ERISA litigation (D. Neb.); the Coca-Cola Enterprises ERISA litigation (N.D. Ga.); Fannie Mae ERISA litigation (D. D.C.); Delphi ERISA litigation (E.D. Mich.); Ford Motor Company ERISA litigation (E.D. Mich.) and the Pfizer ERISA litigation (S.D.N.Y.).

Mr. Piven is a 1975 graduate of Washington University and a 1978 graduate of the University of Miami School Of Law. During law school, Mr. Piven was a student law clerk for the late Honorable United States District Judge C. Clyde Adkins of the Southern District of Florida. Mr. Piven was admitted to the bars of the States of Florida (currently inactive) and Maryland in 1978. Mr. Piven is a member in good standing of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, the United States Court of Federal Claims, the United States Tax Court, the United States District Court for the Districts of Maryland and Colorado, and the United States Courts of Appeals for the First and Fourth Circuits.

MARSHALL N. PERKINS

Mr. Perkins practices in the firm's consumer and securities class action, shareholder, complex professional negligence, and tort litigation areas. Additionally, Mr. Perkins is currently, or has been actively involved with, prosecuting claims on behalf of landowners in Harford County, Maryland proceeding in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York relating to MTBE contamination; claims of computer/hardware owners for deceptive sales practices; claims of Maryland landowners for trespass by Comcast Corp. for its overhead transmission lines; and a number of complex professional negligence cases in the Maryland Circuit Courts.

Illustrative of his previous experience, Mr. Perkins has successfully represented a proposed class of tax advisory customers alleging consumer protection claims before Maryland's highest court, *see Green v. H & R Block*, 355 Md. 488, 735 A.2d 1039 (1999); and a proposed class alleging violation of Maryland's wiretap statute, in *Schmerling v. IWIF*, 368 Md. 434, 795 A.2d 715 (2002). Mr. Perkins' business litigation experience includes representing the bankruptcy trustee in several contingent litigation matters in *In re TimeWorldCom, Inc.*, Case No. 99-1-7353-PM, 905 A. 2d 842 (Bankr. D. Md. 2006).

Mr. Perkins is a 1997 *magna cum laude* graduate of the University Of Baltimore School Of Law, where he was a staff editor for the *University of Baltimore Law Forum*. Mr. Perkins graduated Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude*, with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of

Maryland, College Park. Mr. Perkins is a member of the Bar of the State of Maryland, as well as the Bars of the Maryland Federal District Court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Following receipt of his *juris doctor* in May, 1997, Mr. Perkins was a law clerk to the Honorable Irma S. Raker, Judge, Court of Appeals of Maryland, Maryland's highest court. Mr. Perkins' publications include: Note, *United States v. Virginia, State May Not Maintain a "Unique" Single-Sex Educational Facility Without Providing a Comparable Facility to the Excluded Gender*, 27.1 U. Balt. L. Forum 51 (1996); *Beyond the Roar of the Crowd: Victim Impact Testimony Collides With Due Process*, 27.2 U. Balt. L. Forum 31 (1997).

ELIZABETH A. SCHMID

Ms. Schmid is a member of the Bar of the State of New York. Ms. Schmid earned her *juris doctor* at the University of Buffalo in May 2005, where she was a National Criminal Moot Court Finals Competitor (Spring, 2005); Wechsler Intramural Moot Court Competition Winner (Fall 2004); Mock Trial competitor, Erie County Courthouse (Fall, 2004); and a contributor to the *Buffalo Women's Law Journal* (Spring, 2005). Ms. Schmid attended Sweet Briar College in Lynchburg, Virginia, and received her Bachelor of Arts from Stony Brook University in May 2000.

Following her law school graduation, Ms. Schmid commenced her practice in the Office of General Counsel, Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc., in New York City, where she participated in day-to-day management of significant litigation and risk management projects, and assisted in preparation of reports and litigation studies relating to securities claims, broker/dealer disputes, and investor/customer complaints.

Prior to graduating from law school, Ms. Schmid worked as a law clerk at New York's Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, & Garrison LLP (2005), where she concentrated on large-scale discovery projects; and Watson, Bennett, Colligan, Johnson & Schechter, LLP in Buffalo, NY (2003-2004), where she obtained experience in the areas of insurance, real estate, environmental, employment, and bankruptcy law. Ms. Schmid also served in 2004 as a Legal Intern in the Office of the District Attorney for Suffolk County, New York.

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